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SUBJECT: OCTOBER TURKMENISTAN MEDIA COVERAGE POSITIVE AND ACCURATE
ON CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES, IF RELUCTANT

REF: 1) STATE 173426; 2) STATE 173411; 3) Embassy Press Release on
10/20/06

SUMMARY

1. (U) State media coverage of mission events in October featured President George Bush's congratulatory messages on occasions of Oraz Bayram and Turkmenistan's Independence Day. However, BBC Monitoring Central Asia newswire mistranslated key parts of President Bush's message back into English. Additionally the Charge d'Affaires' TV statement on the occasion of Independence Day appeared on State TV. While accurate, the Turkmen language state media only broadcast The Charge's statement in the early morning, making it unlikely to be seen by most of the viewing public. End Summary.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S MESSAGE INACCURATELY TRANSLATED

2. (U) On October 19, state Watan TV news program (Turkmen) aired President Bush's messages on occasion of the holidays, where he emphasized that "the United States supports the people of Turkmenistan in achieving their full potential and enjoying the democratic stability and prosperity they deserve." The following day state dailies "Neytralniy Turkmenistan" (Russian, circ. 33,901) and "Turkmenistan" (Turkmen, circ. 28,161) gave the messages front-page treatment. BBC Monitoring Central Asia newswire (English) inaccurately translated the broadcast from Watan TV news program as "the United States hopes Turkmen people would fully exploit all their potential in order to enjoy deserved fruits of democratic stability and prosperity." Therefore, the BBC coverage seems to indicate that Turkmenistan already has democratic stability.

STATE TV PREFERS CHARGE'S STATEMENT IN ENGLISH

3. (U) On October 27, state TV channels Altyn Asyr (Turkmen) and TV-4 (Turkmen, English, Russian, French, Chinese, Arabic and Persian) aired the Charge's TV statement on the occasion of Turkmenistan's Independence Day. The Charge expressed Post's readiness to cooperate in the areas of democratic reform, economic reform and security. She emphasized that "as Americans living as citizens of an independent country we not only have certain rights, but also certain responsibilities. Independence goes hand in hand with the constantly evolving process of developing our democracy, giving every citizen the right to participate in deciding the country's future, and the responsibility to play a productive role in building that future." While TV-4 aired the Charge's statement

in English every three hours throughout the day, Altyn Asyr failed to air the statement at normal viewing hours, The Altyn Asyr TV channel aired the statement once at approximately 2:30 a.m.)

COMMENT

14. (SBU) Post expressed concern to BBC on the inaccuracy in the translation of President Bush's message. Post will provide such messages to news agencies directly to prevent inaccuracy in the future. Post suspects that the one time, grave-yard shift broadcast of the Charge's message on state Altyn Asyr TV channel was on purpose, as the statement in Turkmen language prevented mistranslation or manipulation of the message content. The TV crew urged the Charge to make her statement in English during the recording.

BRUSH